



Open Access Repository
www.ssoar.info

The spatial and temporal layers of global history: a reflection on global conceptual history through expanding Reinhart Koselleck's Zeitschichten into global spaces

Schulz-Forberg, Hagen

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:

GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Schulz-Forberg, H. (2013). The spatial and temporal layers of global history: a reflection on global conceptual history through expanding Reinhart Koselleck's Zeitschichten into global spaces. *Historical Social Research*, 38(3), 40-58.
<https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.38.2013.3.40-58>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more Information see:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>


Leibniz-Institut
für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der

Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

The Spatial and Temporal Layers of Global History: A Reflection on Global Conceptual History through Expanding Reinhart Koselleck's *Zeitschichten* into Global Spaces

Hagen Schulz-Forberg*

Abstract: »Die räumlichen und zeitlichen Schichten der Globalgeschichte: Überlegungen zu einer globalen Begriffsgeschichte anhand der Ausweitung von Reinhart Kosellecks *Zeitschichten* in globale Räume«. Recent debates on global history have challenged the understanding of history beyond the nation-state. Simultaneously, they search for non-Eurocentric approaches. This has repercussions on the relation between historical space and time in both historical interpretation and in research design. This article reflects on the possibilities of a global conceptual history by expanding Reinhart Koselleck's theory of temporal layers (*Zeitschichten*) into global spaces. To this end, it introduces the notion of spatial layers (*Raumschichten*). First, historicisation and its relation to and interaction with spatialisation and temporalisation is pondered; then, the impact of global spatial and temporal complexities on comparative and conceptual history is considered, before, thirdly, a framework of three tensions of global history – normative, temporal and spatial – is introduced as a way to concretely unfold historical research questions through global conceptual history. Regarding time and space, the main lines of argument in global history have focused either on the question of whether or not European powers were ahead of non-European ones or on the supposedly Western linearity of time as opposed to a non-Western cosmology or circularity of time. Taking its point of departure in *Zeitschichten*, which break from the linear-vs.-circular logic, this article instead proposes to foreground an actor-based, multi-lingual, global conceptual history to better understand spatio-temporal practices.

Keywords: Agency, experience, concepts, transnational history, global history, modernity.

* Hagen Schulz-Forberg, Aarhus University, Department of Culture and Society, Jens Christian Skous Vej 7, 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark; hishsf@hum.au.dk.

1. Introduction: Time, Space, Experience and Global History

Any theoretical and methodological innovation in global history is necessarily concerned with two main questions: how to find ways of writing history without preconceiving it through the nation and how to design research that avoids Eurocentrism both while drawing its investigative questions and while drafting its conclusive interpretations. To this end, historical space and historical time need to be reconsidered from global perspectives in order to find ways of writing a history of equal terms, in which any actor from anywhere in the world is regarded as having equal validity. This transnational and multi-lingual history finds its sites in many spaces filled with varieties of temporalisations. Temporal uniqueness, temporal routine and presumably timeless normative horizons are neither bound by national space alone, nor expressed in merely mono-lingual ways.

Since the nineteenth century, historians have had the habit of framing temporal unfolding in national spaces. Inspired by postcolonial critique, the spatial turn as well as the transnationalisation of historiography and the historical area studies, global history fundamentally challenges this habit. I would like to contribute to this new agenda and propose an expansion of Reinhart Koselleck's notion of *Zeitschichten* (temporal layers) to think about a) more complex historical temporalisations than national or Western and non-Western ones and b) to connect these with more complex historical spatialisations, with what I call *Raumschichten* (spatial layers) (Koselleck 2003, 19-26).

Koselleck's *Zeitschichten* form an integral part of his understanding of a plurality of history and his complex, alas unfinished, theory of history he called *Historik* (Hoffmann 2010, 213-23). *Zeitschichten* aim at undermining unquestioned ways of employing time in historical interpretation. Koselleck criticized that temporalities were usually expressed by either employing a linear (teleological or open-ended time) or a circular (repetitive time) metaphor. Instead, he proposed a more complex, three-track understanding of interlocked temporal layers: a) the layer of short-term unique experience, b) the layer of mid-term recurrent or repetitive experience without which one would not be able to identify the unique experience, and c) a long-term temporal layer which frames a period in time longer than generational experience and constitutes a normative horizon against which contemporary experience is measured (Koselleck 2003, 20-5). This third layer, expressed by meta-historical categories, which translate into historical evidence (ibid., 301), can be understood as a normative order that frames agency, experience and interpretation.

The historical change from one long-term, normative temporal layer to another one has been called *Sattelzeit* by Koselleck (1972). The notion of *Sattelzeit* has been widely discussed in various ways and applied to diverse tempo-

ralities and different layers of experience in European modernity (Leonhard 2011). In the field of global history, the notion of *Sattelzeit* has been most prominently used by Jürgen Osterhammel (2009, 102-9), who addresses a plurality of overlapping, long-term changes in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. As an illustration for the relation between temporal layers, Koselleck used, unfortunately, an example that merely connects the first two layers, the immediate and the mid-term. The mid-term layer is a layer of habit, of repetition, something happening in time and space to which societies and individuals are accustomed. The fact that the postman delivers mail every working day at a specific time of day is such a repetitive temporal experience for Koselleck. Usually, nothing important happens as we browse through our everyday envelopes. However, this habitual pattern, this planned repetition of the same, is broken when surprising news reach us, such as the death of a relative (Koselleck 2003, 21). The third, normative temporal layer could have been included in the example if the postman had delivered different news; if, for example, a letter had been sent in which the addressee received the news that his forefathers had once owned the privilege to deliver the post. The ownership of royal or feudal privileges was connected to an understanding of freedom in pre-modern times. The privilege of being free is today a mainly personal privilege connected to the rights of the individual as a citizen. Freedom used to be connected, beside other meanings, to having the privilege of producing or doing something: royal chocolate and marmalade, for instance, or delivering the post.

Another illustration of the three temporal layers can be found in the Russo-Japanese War from 1905, or rather in the reaction to its outcome. The fact that Russia, then conceived as firmly belonging to Europe and the West, lost to a non-European power was surely a unique surprise within the already established global communication channels, and it drove home the message that the normative order established for so long, namely that European powers are simply ahead of all the others and thus undefeatable, was outdated.

Importantly, Koselleck has also introduced two historical categories he called *space of experience* and *horizon of expectation* (*Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont*), making the point that the specific time and space of historical actors have a bearing on the way they imagine the past and the future (Koselleck 1985, 1989). Crucially, for Koselleck, *Erfahrungsraum* is a category he connects to time. Experience is defined as present's past. This specific past of a specific present is characterized by a selection of events that is incorporated in the present as its temporal-historical narrative (Koselleck 1989, 354). Expectation is defined as present's future and combines hopes and fears, wishes and will, worry, but also rational analysis (ibid., 355). Experience and expectation, for Koselleck, are useful categories since they combine past and future, and are thus well-suited as an approach to historical time (ibid., 353).

What is a space of experience? For Koselleck, events that are remembered and actions that appear as worthwhile to emulate constitute it. Yet, what does the interior architecture of an *Erfahrungsraum* look like? Does it not include layers of space from local to transnational, even global character? Do we need a conceptualization of global spaces to complement Koselleck's *Zeitschichten* in order to better grasp the relations between historical actors and their space of manoeuvre, both physically and discursively? In fact, historical agents appear as rather passive in Koselleck's theory, framed by their contemporary semantics. I wish to acknowledge historical actors more and include a sense of creative and interest-based multi-level agency. Agency-based understandings of globality have been developed in anthropology, sociology as well as history. What I would like to add to the actor-based perspective is the role of concepts within the semantic spaces of manoeuvre available to historical actors. For this, a more sophisticated spatiality than Koselleck's is needed.

On the other hand, important theories and approaches to agency and its spaces, such as Bourdieu's notion of the field (Bourdieu 1979; Kauppi 2000; Zimmermann and Favell 2011) and Kauppi's analysis of the relation and mutual influence of two distinct fields and transnational elite networks (Kauppi 2005; Kauppi and Madsen 2013), lack a sophisticated understanding of time. They remain temporally flat (see Dorsch 2013 for an elaboration on further theories and their lack of reflection on time). I propose the notion of *Raumschichten* in correspondence to Koselleck's *Zeitschichten* in order to address this shortcoming. History unfolds in a variety of spaces and actors do not only move, speak and make sense within one space, but also between and across spaces. The agency within different yet related spaces is mutually influential. Niilo Kauppi (2005) has shown how a European parliamentary space and national political spaces are related by rather recently developed ways of elite career networking within two connected spaces which follow quite different logics of legitimacy. He took Bourdieu's notions of *field* and *habitus* and transnationalised them. The different spatial logics, the European and the national, constitute arenas with different habits. Actors need to bring different social capital if they want to perform well within more than one space. These spaces of agency are simultaneously arenas in which actors follow certain rules of conduct and address audiences in specific ways. They also need to bring different narratives of time into the different spaces.

Historical actors create historical space and its time as they move through it (de Certeau 1980), think through it and imagine the world through it. With this, they historicise it as they produce a spatio-temporal narrative. The application of *Raumschichten* to global history thus allows a move beyond methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism. Historical actors perform, with the help of concepts, their interests and convictions within interconnected poly-spatial and poly-temporal settings.

The spatial turn (Middell and Naumann 2010) has importantly criticized a long-established tendency within historiography which took the spaces of temporal narratives for granted. Mostly, these spaces were nation-states, clear-cut regions, and so-called civilisations. The interpreted, narrated time (Ricœur 1983) unfolding within these unquestioned spaces was usually Eurocentric – or deliberately anti-Eurocentric.

Yet, why should time be banned as something, presumably, undeniably teleological? Indeed, pinpointing space against time, or *vice versa*, is not fruitful. Historians had a predilection to opt for time over space. This was critically noted by Koselleck (1986) already and has been criticised by the, mostly German, proponents of the spatial turn (Schlögel 2003; Bachmann-Medick 2006; Joachimsthaler 2008). Koselleck favoured a temporal approach because he was fascinated by studying historical time, but he was glad that his preferred metaphor of *Zeitschichten* alluded to physical sedimentation in spaces and territories. I propose to think in spatio-temporal terms rather than in either spatial or temporal ones. In history and in historiography, time and space are connected by spatio-temporal narratives. Furthermore, it must also be kept in mind that history is neither time, nor space but constitutes a third category, distinct from, yet dependent on and related to both time and space (Koselleck 2003, 78f.).

Below, I elaborate first the questions of spatialisation and temporalisation, and I illustrate their connection with Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of *chronotopos* (Bakhtin 2008). From the application of *chronotopos* to history, I derive the notion of *uchronotopia* in order to capture globally different ways of spatialising and temporalising social and political orders through interpreting the past and imagining the future in idealised ways. I then discuss the consequences *Raumschichten* have on comparative and conceptual history. In a final part, I introduce three fields of tension that mutually inform each other and through which the varieties of spatialisation and temporalisation in global history may be grasped: *normative tension*, *temporal tension*, and *spatial tension*. With this, I hope to show how interlocked both *Raum-* and *Zeitschichten* are in global history and how fruitful it is to foreground historical actors and their agency, and to link this agency to a multi-lingual, transnationally conceived global conceptual history.

2. Spatialisation and Temporalisation as Historicisation

All forms of spatialisation and temporalisation produce their own historicity. Individuals, families, groups, societies and nations all have their modes of employing space and time, interpreting their experiences as they act in the present, grope in the past for narrative derivations and move towards an open future, which they hope to stabilise through their goals and dreams as well as the more rational calculations of their means. What is more, not only do differ-

ent modes of spatialisation and temporalisation exist in regard to *who* is writing or narrating history, but also in regard to *how*. To capture the manifold ways of spatialising and temporalising historical narratives, Bakhtin's (2008) notion of *chronotopos* is inspiring. In a unique way, he combines time and space in his analysis of the novel. His main claim about what makes a *chronotopos* is that genre has a decisive influence on how time and space interrelate in a narrative. *Chronotopos*, according to Bakhtin, is a 'form-content category' (2008, 8).

Applying *chronotopos* to history, it describes ways of appropriating historical time, space and actors which are poured into many variations of explanatory and interpretative narratives. Similarly to variations of representing time, space and actors in the novel, different genres of historicisation exist: historiography, memory, individual as well as collective, but also documentary film, diaries, a picture book, legal-political texts such as constitutions or preambles; all follow temporal and spatial, and thus historical logics of their own, bound to each specific genre characteristic.

Additionally, from a global perspective, Chinese, Indian, or African genres of dealing with historicisation through spatialisation and temporalisation, or indeed any other form-content category narrating change over space and time, can be understood as varieties of historical *chronotopoi*. When the perspective is thus broadened further, global history appears as a field of seemingly infinite ways of producing narratives of spatio-temporal unfolding.

Often enough, history is not only temporalised differently and poured into variations of spaces in which time and narrative unfold, but as it is temporalised it becomes a utopian narrative. Reinhart Koselleck illustrated the shift to modernity with the shift from imagining the ideal society in contemporaneity, only located in a distant land or on some shrouded island, to imagining the ideal society in the same or at least similar space but in a different time. In fact, these imaginations should be called *uchronia* (*Uchronie*) rather than *utopia*, he pondered (Koselleck 2003, 35). His early notions of temporalisation have been further developed (Lepenies 1976) and thoroughly criticised (Seifert 1983; Stockhorst 2011, 370-8), mainly for assumptions in the field of natural sciences.

Here, it is not of primary importance whether or not Koselleck was right about his claim that the temporalisation of utopia began, as he argues, with Sebastian Mercier's *L'An 2440* from 1770/71 (Koselleck 2003, 133). Rather, the main part of Koselleck's argument, which finds support from most critics as well (Stockhorst 2011, 386), is in the focus, namely, the fact that a diversity of temporalisations of human and social development, and the spaces in which they are supposed to unfold, are a key signature of modern discourses of legitimacy and history. Historicisation – an exercise which includes past, present and future – is made up of specific forms of spatialisation and temporalisation.

When looking at normative horizons towards which history should develop, *chronotopos* becomes *uchronotopia*. The new normative orders towards which

societies should strive and against which agency is reflected are legitimised through *chronotopoi* and often poured into *uchronotopias*. Normative orders are not infinitely stable, however. The concepts which build the semantics of normative orders are disposed to contestation. Undermining an existing, incremental or encrusted order, however, calls for a counter-narrative that builds on a reinterpretation of history and a projection of a better society into the future. These narratives of normative change exist in grand, sweeping, ideological mode as well as in less triumphant and less holistic forms.

One characteristic of such narratives is the claim to universal, uncontested truth without which no legitimacy can be gained. Here, the ‘transcendental’ (Koselleck 2003, 25) character of the third long-term, normative layer of time comes into play as it interacts with the other layers of time on which historical actors make their claims and construct their narratives. Normative orders are embedded in rationalities and semantic traditions of specific moments in history.

For example, in the early twentieth century the discursive positioning of China in the world underwent a process that has been called the internationalisation of China. The effect of this internationalisation was a perception and active translation and appropriation of key European or Western terms. In Chinese debates on social order and social change towards a different future, logics of temporalisation and the spaces in which it was supposed to unfold (urban centres, rural landscapes, and national unity) came into play. The terms *xin* (new) and *jiu* (old) were increasingly used, putting Chinese experience on a timeline. *Wai* (outer) and *nei* (inner) were also used and became synonymous for the same juxtaposition. Furthermore, within this new temporalised semantic field, the terms *xifang* (the West), *jinhua* (evolution) and, later, *xiandai* (modernity) were used identically when putting Chinese society into a global framework (Sachsenmaier 2014, forthcoming).

The contestation of key concepts which constitute normative orders are, historically as well as contemporarily, never isolated, national or mono-lingual phenomena, however, and often appear in a multi-lingual, transnational relation as in the above case of China as well as in other debates on and actual changes of normative order (Forst and Günther 2010, 15-26). Claims on time, which become claims on a normative order supposed to unfold in a specific space, can thus become a methodological route through which global history may be approached (Schulz-Forberg 2013).

In *Raum-* and *Zeitschichten*, spaces are connected in what can also be expressed as a perspective of spatial scaling. This means that conceptual, thematic and networked approaches from a global historical perspective combine their narratives of change over time with different spatial scales: from macro via meso to micro; from regions via nations to local structures; from global networks and institutions to regional ones and their national and local implementations and specificities – and back. From the perspective of global history, the plurality of history addressed by Koselleck becomes a plurality of historicisa-

tion expressed in different genres of narrating change, in variations of *chronotopoi*.

For example, the case of Arab translations and appropriations of the concept of society described by Ilham Khuri-Makdisi (2014, forthcoming) shows this very well. When one of the main intellectuals concerned with debating Arab society in the late nineteenth century, Shibli Shumayyil, translated and discussed the concept of the social (*al-ijtima'i*), he positioned it in a semantic field that mixed Arab traditions and transnational contemporary influences. The heritage of Ibn Khaldoun is integrated by Shumayyil into a narrative of social Darwinist thought and Marxist ideas unfolding in a wider, regional Arab space. These quite special semantics, in which the Darwinist ideas and biological metaphors of social Darwinism expressed by the German Ludwig Büchner were seemingly compatible with Marxism, Herbert Spencer and Ibn Khaldoun, constituted a *chronotopos* of regional, Arabic character that was related to a wider, transnational discourse of imagining society and the future (Khuri-Makdisi 2014, forthcoming).

3. Global History's Effect on Comparative and Conceptual History

Global history is concerned with, among other things, connectivity. Mainly the interest in connectivity undermines nation-state logics. Harbour towns, trade routes, and shipping lines are among the spaces connected across nations (Hazareesingh 2009), but also urban centres or peripheries as well as whole oceans, such as the 'black Atlantic' (Gilroy 1993; Eckert 2007), which become new historical spaces. An interest in the networks of idea exchange and appropriation, in translation studies and in more global historical semantics is also noticeable (Neumann 2012; Burke and Richter 2012). These developments in global history challenge the practice of comparative and conceptual history. Mainly, this challenge can be summarised with the phrase of 'methodological nationalism', a criticism which all social and human sciences seek to address (Amelina et al. 2012). For historiography, the task is not an easy one. The discipline established itself as a science in the nineteenth century under national auspices and is still mainly practiced as a mono-lingual, single-author exercise entrenched in nationally established scientific practices. Yet, the nation as the origin and base unit of historical comparison has been called to the bar. Approaches such as relational history (Osterhammel 2001; Walser Smith 2004) and entangled as well as transnational history (Werner and Zimmermann 2006; Pernau 2012) seek to address a more subtle and adequate way of writing history beyond the nation.

Alongside methodological nationalism, Eurocentrism appears as a second major point of critical reference against which all global history is measured.

The need to ‘provincialise’ Europe and to put all regions and actors in history on a par by giving them an equally valid voice is strongly called for (Chakrabarty 2000). Indeed, Europe must be read as a concept synonymous with Western within critical narratives of subaltern, post-colonial and global history. In some cases, Eurocentric narratives are simply replaced by Sinocentric ones (Frank 1998). A normative anti-Eurocentric perspective is just as biased and not a convincing alternative, however, simply because it merely confirms a Eurocentric worldview, albeit a mirrored one.

The recent spatial turn in global history has in many ways effectively and importantly addressed the two main points of critique mentioned above, proposed ways of operationalising global historical research by looking at, for example, ‘portals of globalization’ or ‘critical junctures of globalization’, and called for a new, fresh departure into global history (Middell and Naumann 2010). The conflation of globalization and global history brings conceptual problems in its wake, however, as it dilutes the meaning of both, which I here understand as distinct from each other. One side-effect of this conflation is the perspective on space and time itself, as mainly those spaces are looked at which are expected to be filled with encounters and exchanges, connections and commotions, while other spaces remain ignored.

A further impact of global history on the writing of general history can be detected when looking at the object of study, or, rather, at the way in which research questions are addressed. Here, an event-based approach is increasingly making way for a theme-based approach (Bayly 2004; Osterhammel 2009; Rosenberg 2012). Global history has an ever-increasing bearing on established ways of writing history and thus on ways in which time and space are related in historical narratives. It is influential well beyond its own core camp. The embrace of the transnational, and increasingly also the global, by traditional fields of historiography is testimony to this. Mainly, this influence has brought about a general widening of perspectives historians employ upon their original field of expertise as well as a trend towards inserting national or local histories into more complex transnational and translocal contexts. The adjective ‘global’ itself thus does not refer to the planet’s totality. It is a generic term representing recent, innovative approaches of doing history beyond the nation and beyond Eurocentrism in a way that does not abandon historical comparison, but distances itself from those elements of comparative practice that are based on methodological nationalism. The nation, accordingly, is not the starting point of historical analyses anymore, while it remains part of the result and becomes a transnational phenomenon (Conrad 2010). It is recognised for its role within global historical processes; nothing more, yet nothing less. Indeed, it can be said that the long period of nation-building, which began in the early nineteenth century, was a historical reaction to global trade and power relations. The nation became, and remains until today, the main polity form. It is stable and simultaneously flexible enough to frame political struggles, contestations, and

negotiations among its citizens and to continuously readdress and at least try to solve the social question. This is not to say that the nation-state is capable of effectively solving all political, economic, and social questions. In fact, it never has been. To assume otherwise is an oversimplification of nation-state history. Indeed, the spatial tension between global economic spaces and national social spaces is one of the signatures of global history since the nineteenth century (Polanyi 2001; Bayly 2004).

The recent developments in global history have also highlighted that methodologically refined approaches need to be developed further, which allow searching for, showing and following reciprocities and entanglements, when and where they exist, and which establish a meaningful dialogue between the micro and the macro level. A multi-lingual, transnational history that finds inductive ways of treating its questions and findings is able to identify and analyse the complex spatialities and temporalities between the very small and the very large. The basic presupposition of an equality of all histories, be they European or not, which is ultimately the goal of connecting *Raum-* and *Zeitschichten* in global history, may be better served this way.

Conceptual history offers a promising route to a source-based global history rooted and unfolding in these overlapping *Raum-* and *Zeitschichten* (Schulz-Forberg 2014, forthcoming). Spatial layers are manifold. They follow two main characteristics, however: a unit logic creating presumably closed spaces lying on top of each other (the local, the regional, the national, the transnational, the global) and a network logic creating presumably open or more accessible and fuzzy spaces in more complex connectivities (Tomlinson 1999), expressed by terms like network, field (Bourdieu 1979), encounters, relations, or scapes (Appadurai 1996) and cutting through the unit spaces. Especially Appadurai's notion of five global scapes and an imaginary belonging to each scape is important for an understanding of spatial layers, which I would like to understand as more interactive than Appadurai's five scapes that may transcend local or national units, yet appear as just as closed in their transnational shape when they exclusively contain ethnicity, media, technology, finance, and ideas. In historical cases, these scapes are not easily confined as such, and there exist many more. In fact, they often overlap and inform each other as they are created by historical agency. Actors in *Raumschichten* address a variety of audiences in a variety of arenas. To this end, they must understand and follow the communicative rules in relation to each audience and to each arena. Historically, these audiences and arenas were never isolated.

The most well-known example for a single actor's misconception of how to address a variety of global spaces may be Woodrow Wilson's proposal of his conceptualisation of national self-determination at the end of the First World War. He meant the European nations emerging from the demise of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empire. And he meant that all other parts of the world would still need to go through a long learning process until they were ready for

autonomy. Global actors, such as Ho Chi Minh as well as Korean, Egyptian, Chinese and Indian intellectuals, understood him differently and demanded immediate self-determination for their nations (Manela 2007).

When writing global conceptual history, the focus does not need to be on a comparison between understandings of certain concepts, but on relating concepts, their translation, their appropriation, performance and application. The fact that certain concepts, such as society or citizen, do not share identical meanings because they are embedded in different semantic traditions and languages is not a convincing argument against comparing them in a variety of settings and languages. The objects of comparison do not need to be identical or have identical qualities. In fact, a certain semantic friction emerging from the different semantic traditions is highly interesting from a historical perspective. Recent studies on translations of concepts have begun to address this friction (Gluck and Tsing 2009; Burke and Richter 2012).

Historical actors translate, appropriate, contest, in one word: use a concept. They do not do so in a vacuum, however. Their specific historical and semantic context, and the way in which they put the concept into practice, must also be taken into account. One concept thus plays different roles and differs in meaning depending on its historical, spatio-temporal settings.

One essential precondition for such a global conceptual history is the exclusion of any form of temporalities of difference, or what can be called *progressive comparison* with Koselleck (1979, 324), from the heuristic framework. To be sure, the imposition of progressive comparison plays an important role in history. Historical actors have continuously performed on the basis of such a line of thought, which refers to notions of models and their emulations, of being temporally ahead and behind, of being advanced and in need of catching up, of installing roads towards successful development, of who should be part of the race ahead and who should be excluded.

The notion of progressive comparison inspired colonial agencies and civilising missions as well as the agency of the formerly colonized who, as for example Jawaharlal Nehru or Gamal Abdel Nasser, mobilized the notion of being behind politically and socially. Progressive comparison should not, however, inform any contemporary historiographic approach. The important task for global history is thus to take normativity and the teleology produced by progressive comparison out of the theoretical approach and out of the hidden *a priori* sometimes found in the questions asked. To ask which essential characteristics European societies possessed to become globally hegemonic empires in the nineteenth century is such a question. It is still built on temporalities of difference as part of the historian's perspective and not as part of the history s/he tries to interpret. A recent example for the longevity of such a framing of historical investigation is Langewiesche (2013). Rather, the historicity of temporalities and their spatialisations need to be understood as a crucial element of what describes modern global history from the, roughly, mid-nineteenth centu-

ry until our present day as well as the way in which experiences, imaginations (Schinkel 2005) and expectations are linked temporally through concepts and the normativities evoked through them.

The theoretical claim of a global conceptual history is that temporal logics are also at work in non-Western discourses of legitimacy, inclusion and exclusion. In many historical situations, this seems to have been the case. In fact, as, for example, Sachsenmaier (2014, forthcoming), Pannu (2014, forthcoming) and Khuri-Makdisi (2014, forthcoming) show, in Chinese, Malay, and Arab, a certain shift from cyclical to linear temporalisation can be found in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, a 'linearization' of Asian temporal semantics is certainly not the final and only research result. Rather, linear temporalisations are found among and mixed with older cyclical ones that keep having their role as a semantic reference system, for example, reminiscence to Confucianism in Chinese discourses. The question, globally, should thus not be whether or not the world is now imagining time in linear, presumably Western ways, but, rather, in which more complex, Koselleckian ways different temporal layers and spatial layers interact in specific historical situations and what role key concepts play in transnational, related historical settings. It was not a single temporal logic that was globalised through the export of European concepts in the nineteenth and twentieth century, but variations of temporal logics and *chronotopoi* have moved into and developed independently, for example, in Asia through both self-reflection and conceptual appropriation.

4. Normative, Temporal and Spatial Tensions in Global History

One of the key signatures of modern history is the constant invocation of the future through a constant reinterpretation of the past. Predicting the future is among any society's daily routines. The problem about prognosis is, of course, that it is more often inaccurate than accurate. Alas, to simply leave the future as an open, untouched tomorrow seems to be a frightening idea for both individuals and societies. This double-sided impossibility makes the modern dilemma. It is impossible to accurately foresee the future; and it is just as impossible to simply accept it as an open-ended temporal unfolding of human lives and societies. The requirement to forecast illustrates the complete temporalisation of modern legitimacies. Any legitimate agency is based on both temporalisation and spatialisation, and thus on historicisation. And it is guided by the conceptual construction and recognition of a normative horizon that serves as the ultimate legitimating factor; it may also be called Koselleck's third, long-term *Zeitschicht*. For European history, this normative temporal layer was always just as double-sided as the art of prognosis and can be broadly grasped as uto-

pian, or optimistic, and dystopian, or pessimistic temporalisations of human societies. The optimistic, Eurocentric, Enlightenment-based idea of human progress has inspired interpretations of humanity's road to the good society – from Rousseau's *perfectibilité* to Hegel's notion of the world spirit to the claim on the universal validity of human rights and the good social order it represents. This modern global imaginary (Steger 2008) informed imperial agency (guised as a civilising mission), twentieth century international institutions and international law from the mid-nineteenth century onward until today (Koskenniemi 2001; Anghie 2005; Todorov 2005, 2009). It is at the heart of Chakrabarty's anti-Hegelian argument to 'provincialise' Europe (Chakrabarty 2000) as well as all scholarly inhibitions against the concept of modernity as an ultimately always teleological and Eurocentric discourse of global order.

On the other hand, dystopian temporalisations of modern human history are not short of supply either. Amplified by the Second World War, the pessimistic visions of the post-1918 period were continued by conservative philosophers such as Heidegger who embraced a dystopian interpretation of history, but also critical thinkers such as Adorno and Horkheimer (1947) have written on negative dialectics of modernity and the 'underside of modernity' was uncovered later (Dussel and Mendieta 1996). These visions ponder the dark sides of Enlightenment and the teleologies it produced against the backdrop of the experience of a devastating Second World War, totalitarian regimes and Nazi crimes against humanity and atrocities as well as the possibility of self-annihilation through the atomic bomb. Koselleck (1988 [1959]) himself provided a rather pessimistic interpretation of modern history and bourgeois society when he subtitled his work on *Critique and Crisis* with: *Enlightenment and the pathogenesis of modern society*. In global history, modernity is still a very visible and highly contested concept. It is not necessarily an analytical concept, yet still functions as an explanatory and descriptive one. Bayly alluded to the riddle of the modern (2004), Osterhammel employed *Sattelzeiten* for global history (2009), and Carola Dietze and Chakrabarty engaged in a highly stimulating debate about the relations between modernity and global history, the former arguing for a modernity understood as an equal playing field for global historical actors, the latter repeating his case that modernity is all about hierarchy, of being ahead or behind, of keeping space in temporally asynchronous relations (Dietze 2008; Chakrabarty 2008).

Independent of the theoretical understanding of the role of modernity in global history, the dynamics of temporalisation and spatialisation, yielding ever-new pasts and futures, lie at the heart of all discourses of legitimacy in modern history. These discourses are complex, much more complex than the simple circular-vs.-linear logic. Historical actors live, act and make sense in various, interconnected *Raum-* and *Zeitschichten*, each of which is filled with variations of *chronotopoi*. And, depending on the audience they want to reach and the arena in which they communicate, they apply different spatio-temporal

strategies and narratives. Rather than looking at whether or not a supposedly Western, linear temporalisation has spread globally, it may be possible to approach questions of spatio-temporal practice and historicisation through three interconnected tensions common to most of those practices and their *chronotopoi*: normative, temporal, and spatial tensions, which together constitute the main points of reference in discourses of legitimacy. All three categories are characterised by endogenous and exogenous tensions.

Normative tension describes the continuous friction between the conceptualisation and contestation of the world as it should be and the experience of the world as it appears to be from the perspective of historical actors. The key characteristic of all normative tension is the conviction that human individuality and society can be actively ameliorated in a temporal movement toward a normative horizon. In this imagination of human self-control and the human ability to cut off the past and create a new tomorrow lies the conviction that it is actually possible to do just that. I can become a better I. We can become a better we. The projection of new normative horizons into the future, and the conceptual contestation about what this future should be like, gives agency a spatial and temporal dynamic. On the exogenous level, it may suffice to point to the recent contestation of universalisms such as human rights. For a Western normative temporal layer, human rights are indisputably part of the normative canon and are not to be questioned or undermined. From a Chinese perspective or an Indian one, the universal claim inherent in human rights brings forth critique (Sen 2001). To use another language and historical setting than the usually dominant Indian or Chinese examples, the endogenous contestation of normative tensions can be exemplified by the Malayan conceptual struggle about who should populate the newly demarcated space of the Malayan nation in the early twentieth century. One of the oldest concepts describing the Malay social order, *kerajaan* (kingship), was abandoned, and a new term gained semantic hegemony, namely *masyarakat* (the people). For Malayan intellectuals and political actors in the 1930s, the concept of the social allowed for a new temporalisation and spatialisation of Malay history as Malay society was given a clear national border (Pannu 2014, forthcoming).

Temporal tensions refer to contestation of historical interpretation. Which past for which space? Whose past is it? Who is writing the past? Who is the legitimate author of the past? For which future should we strive? These kinds of questions characterise temporal tensions. Contested temporalities are found on both the exogenous and endogenous level as well. A society continuously reinterprets its own past. This is not always a smooth, consensual process, but fraught with critique and contestation of how to come to terms with one's past. Truth commissions and periods of transitional justice are just as representative for these kinds of endogenous contestations as debates about monuments supposed to capture narratives of the past and how to remember it in order to provide for a better tomorrow. When it comes to exogenous temporal tensions, the

question about legitimate authorship of the past can be illustrated by the post-colonial critique of Western historiography, which ultimately is about finding an endogenous voice that shuns away the exogenous authors from the formerly colonizing countries.

Spatial tensions are often characterised by claims of spatial ownership, be it actual, physical, or discursive ownership as well as by the specific relations between spatial units, such as the global and the national. Claims on space are commonplace in history. Endogenous spatial tensions are thus, for example, different claims on the same space. Exogenous tensions exist just as well because different spatial layers mutually influence each other. The transnational business elites have a bearing on national and local economic performance. The global economy has a bearing on national social spaces. Transnational networks have a bearing on local and national elites. In all three cases, the seemingly lower or smaller spatial unit has a bearing on the higher or larger level, too, as local actors talk back to the global, local markets influence global strategies and national elites bring their traditions into transnational networks.

There is no shortcoming of proposals for studying the global. Yet, most of the discussion is still on understanding the global rather than on operationalising research about it. Overcoming methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism has had repercussions on the conceptualisation of the global. To acknowledge that *tout se tient*, from the micro to the macro, and that all relations between all actors make up the global, is far from having a clear compass about how to do research, however. The study of concepts in transnational, multi-lingual settings based on an understanding of historicisation sketched out above may be such a concrete compass, allowing for single-author studies as well as for large team-based projects. Coupling such an innovative study of concepts with an actor-based approach takes conceptual history out of a seemingly remote analysis of intellectual history and political thought, and recouples it with a contested global social and political history instead. The matrix of normative, temporal and spatial tensions may be a fruitful tool for the employment of a source-based, case-based, inductive global history. I suggest basing such a historiography on an expansion of Koselleck's *Zeitschichten* into more complex global *Raumschichten*. Koselleck's effort at breaking up the cyclical-linear dichotomy is thus coupled with an effort at breaking up the national territorial imagination as the beginning and the end of historical reflection. Furthermore, such a historiography is able to engage with historical experience and with the various ways in which *chronotopoi* are articulated in global history as well as with the *uchronotopias* they produce.

References

- Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. 1947. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. Amsterdam: Querido.
- Amelina, Anna, Thomas Faist, Nina Glick Schiller, and Devrim D. Negriz, eds. 2012. *Beyond methodological nationalism: Research strategies for cross-border studies*. London: Routledge.
- Anghe, Anthony. 2005. *Imperialism, sovereignty and the making of international law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bachmann-Medick, Doris. 2006. *Cultural Turns – Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften*. Reinbek: Rowohlt.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. 2008. *Chronotopos*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.
- Bayly, Christopher. 2004. *The birth of the modern world, 1780–1914: Global connections and comparisons*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1979. *La distinction: critique sociale du jugement*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit.
- Burke, Martin, und Melvin Richter, eds. 2012. *Why concepts matter: Translating social and political thought*. Leiden: Brill.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2008. In defense of provincializing Europe: A response to Carola Dietze. *History and Theory* 47 (1): 85-96.
- Conrad, Sebastian. 2010. *Globalisation and the nation in imperial Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Certeau, Michel de. 1980. *L'invention du quotidien. Vol. 1, Arts de faire*. Paris: UGE.
- Dietze, Carola. 2008. Towards a history on equal terms: A discussion of provincializing Europe. *History and Theory* 47 (1): 69-84.
- Dorsch, Sebastian. 2013. Space/time practices and the production of space and time: An introduction. *Historical Social Research* 38 (3): 7-21.
- Dussel, Enrique, and Eduardo Mendieta. 1996. *The underside of modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.
- Eckert, Andreas. 2007. Bringing the 'Black Atlantic' into global history: The project of pan-Africanism. In *Competing visions of world order: Global moments and movements, 1880s-1930s*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier, 237-57. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Forst, Rainer, and Klaus Günther, eds. 2011. *Die Herausbildung normativer Ordnungen: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven*. Frankfurt/M. et al.: Campus.
- Frank, Andre G. 1998. *ReOrient: Global economy in the Asian age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and double consciousness*. London: Verso.
- Gluck, Carol, and Anna Tsing, eds. 2009. *Words in motion: Toward a global lexicon*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Hazareesingh, Sandip. 2009. Interconnected Synchronicities: The Production of Bombay and Glasgow as Modern Ports, c. 1850-1880. *Journal of Global History* 4 (1): 7-31.
- Hoffmann, Stefan Ludwig. 2010. Koselleck, Arendt, and the anthropology of historical experience. *History and Theory* 49 (2): 212-36.
- Joachimsthaler, Jürgen. 2008. Der Kultur-Innenraum. In *Kulturwissenschaft(en) in der Diskussion*, ed. Jürgen Joachimsthaler and Eugen Kotte, 47-71. Munich: Meidenbauer.
- Kauppi, Niilo. 2000. *The politics of embodiment: Habits, power, and Pierre Bourdieu's theory*. Frankfurt/M. et al.: P. Lang.
- Kauppi, Niilo. 2005. *Democracy, social resources and political power in the European Union*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Kauppi, Niilo, and Mikael Rask Madsen. 2013. *Transnational power elites: The new professionals of governance, law and security*. London: Routledge.
- Khuri-Makdisi, Ilham. 2014, forthcoming. The conceptualization of the social in late 19th and early 20th century Arabic thought and language. In *A global conceptual history of Asia, 1860-1940*, ed. Hagen Schulz-Forberg. London: Pickering & Chatto.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. 1972. Über die Theoriebedürftigkeit der Geschichtswissenschaft. In *Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft und Praxis des Geschichtsunterrichts*, ed. Werner Conze. Stuttgart: Klett.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. 1979. *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. 1985. 'Space of Experience' and 'Horizon of Expectation': Two historical categories. In *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, ed. idem, trans. Keith Tribe, 267-88. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. 1986. Raum und Geschichte: Schlußvortrag auf dem Historikertag in Trier. In *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik*, ed. idem 2003, 78-96. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. 1988. *Critique and Crisis. Enlightenment and the pathogenesis of modern society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. 1989. 'Erfahrungsraum' und 'Erwartungshorizont' – zwei historische Kategorien. In *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, ed. idem, 349-75.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. 2003. *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.
- Koskenniemi, Martti. 2002. *The gentle civilizer of nations: The rise and fall of international law, 1870-1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Langewiesche, Dieter. 2013. Das Jahrhundert Europas: Eine Annäherung in global-historischer Perspektive. *Historische Zeitschrift* 296 (1): 29-48.
- Leonhard, Jörn. 2011. Erfahrungsschichten der Moderne: Von der komparativen Semantik zur Temporalisierung europäischer 'Sattelzeiten'. In *Begriffene Geschichte: Beiträge zum Werk Reinhart Kosellecks*, ed. Hans Joas und Peter Vogt, 423-48. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Lepénies, Wolf. 1976. *Das Ende der Naturgeschichte: Wandel kultureller Selbstverständlichkeiten*. Munich, et al.: Hanser.
- Manela, Erez. 2007. *The Wilsonian moment: Self-determination and the international origins of anticolonial nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Middell, Matthias, and Katja Naumann. 2010. Global history and the spatial turn: from the impact of area studies to the study of critical junctures of globalization. *Journal of Global History* 5 (1): 149-70.
- Neumann, Victor. 2012. Peculiarities of the translation and adaptation of the concept of nation in East-Central Europe: The Hungarian and Romanian cases in the nineteenth century. *Contributions* 7 (1): 72-101.
- Osterhammel, Jürgen. 2001. *Geisteswissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaats: Studien zu Beziehungsgeschichte und Zivilisationsvergleich*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Osterhammel, Jürgen. 2009. *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- Pannu, Paula. 2014, forthcoming. From 'Kerajaan' (kingship) to 'Masyarakat' (the people): Malay articulations of nationhood through the concepts of the 'Social' and the 'Economic'. In *A Global Conceptual History of Asia, 1860-1940*, ed. Hagen Schulz-Forberg. London: Pickering & Chatto.
- Pernau, Margrit. 2012. *Transnationale Geschichte*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Polanyi, Karl. 2001 [1944]. *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Ricœur, Paul. 1983. *Temps et récit. Tome I: L'intrigue et le récit historique*. Paris: Le Seuil.
- Rosenberg, Emily S., ed. 2012. *A world connecting, 1870-1945*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sachsenmaier, Dominic. 2014, forthcoming. Notions of society in early twentieth century China, ca 1900-1925: Visions of society in China. In *A Global Conceptual History of Asia, 1860-1940*, ed. Hagen Schulz-Forberg. London: Pickering & Chatto.
- Schinkel, Anders. 2005. Imagination as a category of history: An essay concerning Koselleck's concepts of 'Erfahrungsraum' and 'Erwartungshorizont'. *History and Theory* 44 (1): 42-54.
- Schlögel, Karl. 2003. *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit. Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik*. Munich: Hanser.
- Schulz-Forberg, Hagen, ed. 2013. *Zero hours: Conceptual insecurities and new beginnings in the interwar period*. Brussels et al.: P. I. E. Peter Lang.
- Schulz-Forberg, Hagen, ed. 2014, forthcoming. *A global conceptual history of Asia, 1860-1940*. London: Pickering & Chatto.
- Seifert, Arno. 1983. 'Verzeitlichung': Zur Kritik einer neueren Frühneuzeitkategorie. *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 10: 447-77.
- Sen, Amartya. 2001. *Freedom as development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Steger, Manfred. 2008. *The rise of the global imaginary: Political ideologies from the French Revolution to the global war on terror*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stockhorst, Stefanie. 2011. Novus ordo temporum: Reinhart Kosellecks These von der Verzeitlichung des Geschichtsbewußtseins durch die Aufklärungsphilosophie in methodenkritischer Perspektive. In *Begriffene Geschichte. Beiträge zum Werk Reinhart Kosellecks*, ed. Hans Joas and Peter Vogt, 359-86. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. 2005. *The new world disorder: Reflections of a European*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Todorov, Tzvetan. 2009. *In defence of the enlightenment*. London: Atlantic Books.
- Tomlinson, John. 1999. *Globalization and culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Walser Smith, Helmut. 2004. For a differently centred Central European history: Reflections on Jürgen Osterhammel, *Geschichtswissenschaft Jenseits des Nationalstaats*. *Central European History* 37 (1): 115-36.
- Werner, Michael, and Bénédicte Zimmermann. 2006. Beyond comparison: Histoire croisée and the challenge of reflexivity. *History and Theory* 45 (1): 30-50.
- Zimmermann, Ann, and Adrian Favell. 2011. Governmentality, political field or public sphere? Theoretical alternatives in the political sociology of the EU. *European Journal of Social Theory* 14: 489-515.